

# Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning

## An Annotated Bibliography

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### ABSTRACT

This bibliography was produced as part of an Office of Naval Research project titled “Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning.” The project approach is intended to provide a platform of knowledge based on existing research that will improve our ability to field useful and meaningful decision support in cultures where the capacity for such support is either limited or non-existent, with a focus on three non-Western cultures: Arab, Pashtun and Somali culture. The focus of the project is on *intertemporal reasoning* and how the focal cultures differ in this respect from the West. Intertemporal reasoning is defined as the psychosocial and cultural processes engaged when people are called upon to either integrate past experiences and events or projects forward to the future. This bibliography is a collection of annotated entries that each of the three project researchers developed as part of their particular examination of the existing literature. Emphasis is on Arab culture, owing to the relative availability of resources published in English. Intended readers include those with an interest in this highly-focused aspect of non-Western cultures.

Acknowledgement: This project was sponsored by the Office of Naval Research (Human, Social, Cultural, Behavioral Program) under Contract Number N00014-09-C-0570 to MacGregor Bates, Inc.

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## About the Contributors

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

This bibliography was produced as part of an Office of Naval Research project titled “Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning.” The project represents a nexus between three key research and application fields that have previously had relatively little engagement with each other in the context of a common problem. These fields are formal analysis (as represented by the decision analytic community), cultural anthropology and psychology. Although anthropology and psychology do overlap in some contexts, as does psychology and formal analysis, the three together provide an opportunity to extend our understanding of how to engage emerging, non-western cultures in capacity building with respect to development of physical and social infrastructure. The project approach is intended to provide a platform of knowledge based on existing research that will improve our ability to field useful and meaningful decision support in cultures where the capacity for such support is either limited or non-existent. Our working hypothesis is that research in the three fields associated with this project can be used to inform and guide the appropriate use and development of methods of formal analysis in the context of non-western cultures, with a focus on Arab, Pashtun and Somali cultures.

The focus of the project is on intertemporal reasoning (discussed below) and how the above cultures differ in this respect from the West. The resources for the project are existing research in English that is reviewed and synthesized to relate the separate findings to this focal issue. This bibliography is a collection of annotated entries that each of the three project researchers developed as part of their particular examination of the existing literature.

In general, we found more existing information on Arab culture relevant to the project’s objectives than for either the Pashtun or Somali cultures. The bibliography contains entries for those resources that are most strongly directed toward cultural information, and/or that are difficult to obtain. The process of developing the bibliography facilitated interaction between the three researchers associated with the project, and was used to inform the development of a set of technical papers and conference presentations. This provided a common framework for information sharing.

### 1.2 Intertemporal Reasoning

What is meant by *intertemporal reasoning*? All cultures deal with time. How they understand it is a defining cultural characteristic. We use the term *intertemporal reasoning* to mean the psychosocial and cultural processes engaged

when people are called upon to either integrate past experiences and events (history) or project forward to desired or undesired future states. Intertemporal reasoning can refer to how a culture deals with time itself as a phenomenon, or how events that either take place or have taken place are recalled, represented and organized in terms of an explanation or history of the culture. Indeed, intertemporal reasoning includes how cultures ascribe meaning to events, including the meaning of the past and present in terms of the future. Intertemporality, as a cultural characteristic, describes differences between cultures that have importance for understanding social processes, such as decision making and planning, including the relationship between time and preferences, and the effects of time on cognitive processes.<sup>4</sup>

We use the rubric of intertemporality to refer also to a number of psychological processes that are engaged in the course of reconstructing a cultural history for the purposes of evaluating the appropriateness or desirability of a present action or prospect calls upon intertemporal reasoning processes that involve the accumulation and integration of historical events or decisions to arrive at a reference point for current actions. In the context of an action proposed for the present and for which the consequences are not realized until some, perhaps distant, point in time a similar invocation of intertemporal reasoning is required to gauge, for example, the impact of the decision on future generations. Thus, cultural histories, the process of genealogical reckoning, and impacts on future generations all involve intertemporal reasoning.

In short, intertemporal reasoning is a formalization of the informal approach by which a culture tells its cultural “story.” As much as intertemporal reasoning captures the role of historicism (and manner of historical analysis) in defining a culture, it denotes as well the more everyday manner in which a culture views the present as an extension of the past and a continuation into the future. As we will discuss in this paper, both western cultures and the Arab culture engage in intertemporality, but do so on the basis of some strongly differing principles that affect not only features of daily life, but also impact important social, economic and political institutions.

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<sup>4</sup> Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2003). Temporal construal. *Psychological Review*, 110 (3), 403-421. Forster, J., Friedman, R. S., & Liberman, N. (2004). Temporal construal effects on abstract and concrete thinking: Consequences for insight and creative cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87 (2), 177-189. MacGregor, D. G. (1993). Time pressure and task adaptation: Alternative perspectives on laboratory studies. In O. Svenson, & Maule, A. J. (Ed.), *Time Pressure and Stress in Human Judgment and Decision Making* (pp. 73-82). New York: Plenum.

### 1.3 Presentations and Papers

The entries in this bibliography provided foundational material for the following set of papers and conference presentations:

#### 1.3.1 Publications

MacGregor, D. G., & Godfrey, J. (in press). Intertemporal Reasoning and Cross-Cultural Decision Making. In G. Salvendy & W. Karwowski, W. (Eds.). *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Cross-Cultural Decision Making*. New York: Wiley & Sons. Abstract available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1750266>

#### 1.3.2 White Papers

MacGregor, D. G., & Godfrey, J. (2011). *Arab Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning*. Abstract available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1966639>.

MacGregor, D. G., & Godfrey, J. (2011). *Observations on the Concept of Risk and Arab Culture*. Abstract available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1966639>.

Tainter, J. & MacGregor, D. G. (2011). *Pashtun social structure: Cultural perceptions and segmentary lineage organization*. Abstract available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1934940>

#### 1.3.3 Conference Presentations

MacGregor, D. G., Tainter, J., & Godfrey, J. (2009, August). *Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning*. Paper presented at the HSCB Focus 2010 Conference Chantilly, VA.

MacGregor, D. G., & Godfrey, J. (2010, July). *Intertemporal Reasoning and Cross-Cultural Decision Making*. Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Cross-Cultural Decision Making, Miami, FL.<sup>5</sup>

MacGregor, D. G., & Godfrey, J. (2011, February). *Observations on the Concept of Risk and Arab Culture*. Paper presented at the HSCB Focus 2011 Conference, Chantilly, VA.

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<sup>5</sup> Conference held jointly with the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics (AHFE).

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 About This Bibliography

This bibliography was prepared as part of a research effort conducted by three contributors, and reflects their respective styles with respect to annotating references relating to cultural aspects of intertemporal reasoning. Some annotations are relatively brief (e.g., a paragraph or two) while others are more extensive (e.g., multiple pages). The length of the annotations reflects the relevance and depth of the material encountered in each resource. Some resources produced a few, but salient, points or concepts. Other resources produced a larger set of potentially relevant material for inclusion in presentations and papers.

In addition to its use as a research tool, the bibliography is also a potential resource for readers with an interest in the topic of intertemporal reasoning and/or a general interest in Arab, Pashtun and Somali culture. The majority of the entries in the bibliography pertain to Arab culture, with some resources pertaining to Pashtun and Somali culture. The dominance of Arab culture in the entries reflects the availability of resources in this area. Although some resources on Pashtun culture were identified, these pertained largely to social organization, as was the case for Somali culture. Only resources in English are included, and there may be resources in, for example, Arabic that are relevant. Future work will draw upon these, assuming they exist.

The entries are listed alphabetically by author. Some entries may be familiar to some readers, though perhaps not with the commentaries and quotations presented here that relate to the focal point of the research.

### 2.2 A Note On Resources

In the course of this project, we drew upon a wide range of published resources. Our intention was to engage a range of ideas that related to intertemporal reasoning and its implications for economic theory, with emphasis on those aspects of economic theory that touch upon practices and applications important in the West.

As much as possible we strove to identify a combination of anthropological, psychological and sociological resources that provide insights into the intersection between Arab culture and the way that culture conceptualizes its past in relation to its present and its future. Although much has been written on the Arab world, this intersection turns out to be relatively small. Much of the writing on Arab culture describes such things as its social structure and its customs. Only more recently has writing appeared that sheds light on Arab psychology.

Some entries in the bibliography are historical materials. For example, Ibn Khaldûn's *The Muqaddimah*, although written in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is included because of the foundational place it occupies in Arab worldviews. Likewise, the bibliography contains references to writings about Islam and the Qur'an as these influences factor significantly into the unique way the culture considers time and events.

We do not claim that this bibliography is exhaustive, only that it is fairly representative of the type and range of readings that bear upon the question of intertemporal reasoning and its relationship to matters important for relating to the Arab culture.

### 2.3 A Note On General Approach

Our approach in preparing this bibliography has been to look at general features of Arab culture with respect to Western culture. A number of resources have looked at Arab culture in this way, with Western culture as a reference point. However, our research has been focused on a specific aspect of culture, namely intertemporal reasoning. Although a number of Arabists have contrasted Arab culture with the West, their approach has been general and they have undertaken their cross-cultural comparisons with a rather broad scope. Our much narrower scope and focus on a single characteristic of culture, namely how it deals with time and related issues, has made it necessary to consult a range of resources. Writers on Arab culture have each emphasized different features of that culture and none has dealt in depth with the matter of how Arab culture conceptualizes time and events as part of integrating its past, present and future. All, however, have touched upon this and related topics, and this survey of their work synthesizes their collective findings with a focus on intertemporal reasoning.

Nonetheless, the result of this synthesis is in the form of background on Arab culture *writ* large. That is, our work reported here pertains to the broader Arab culture and in terms of its traditions as opposed to contemporary perceptions and attitudes. It is perfectly reasonable to want more detailed knowledge about Arabs today, and even to want insights on specific groups of people who can be said to be part of Arab culture. At the present, the open literature on the Arab world has relatively little to say about how Arabs differ from one another except in the area of social organization and lineages. Thus, we have information about social structure and even family differences, but relatively little (if anything) about how Arab cultural subdivisions differ from one another in terms of meaningful psychological or sociological traditions. In addition, we have no taxonomy or theory of individual differences that applies to members of the Arab culture and

that can be used to make meaningful predictions about focused attitudes and behaviors that might be useful in a practical context.

Along these latter lines (i.e., individual differences) we do have a great deal of information about Western cultures, where the characterization of individuals and groups of interest has been an active area of research for several decades, having both theoretical as well as practical value. Certainly, it is important for work relating to Arab culture to take a similar tack. For the present, however, we must be satisfied with taking the somewhat dangerous step of assuming (though tacitly and with extreme caution) that Western theories of human behavior have applicability elsewhere and in cultures that have maintained a very strong connection with their traditions, as has Arab culture.

## 2.4 A Note on Arab Culture and Islam

To many in the West, Arab culture is synonymous with Islam. Although the historical roots of Islam reside in the geography of the Arab world, these two ideas have become associated in ways that can be distracting. A large majority of Arabs are Muslim, but approximately 8% to 10% of Arabs are not.<sup>6</sup> Looking at Muslim representation worldwide, Arabs comprise only about 12% of the world's Muslims.

Given the centuries-long relationship that the Arab culture has had with Islam, it is difficult at this point to unravel their mutual influences on one another. And, indeed, for the purposes of this paper we regard members of the Arab world as influenced by Islam whether they are Muslim or not. A parallel exists in the West with respect to Christianity and its influence on Western cultures: although representation of various religions in the U.S., for example, varies widely the culture itself is predominantly based on values, beliefs and attitudes that are linked to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The pervasiveness of these traditions is sometimes difficult for individuals to see, even if they do not devoutly practice a particular religion. Even religious secularists are influenced by the larger cultural traditions of which they are a part (e.g., Sunday as a non-working day; Easter as a holiday). Our focus in this paper is to stay as much as possible within a context of Arab culture and to forego opportunities to explore the interesting and revealing conflicts that occur within Islam as it encounters the challenges of social change.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This percentage is difficult to estimate and sources vary in their estimates from something on the order of 4-6% on the low end to 12%-plus on the high end.

<sup>7</sup> For more background on Islam in the modern era, see various works by Bassam Tibi including: Tibi, B. (1988). *The crisis of modern Islam: A pre-industrial culture in the scientific-technological age* (J. von Sivers, Trans.). Salt Lake City, UT: University of



## 2.5 The Myth of the Monolithic Arab

In this paper, we sometimes refer to the “Arab mind,” a term that two of the authors of references used in this bibliography have adopted as titles for their books. In actuality, there is no single Arab mind. There is, however, a natural human tendency to think of “the other” (e.g., those who live differently or in other places) as having monolithic qualities of “sameness” or “consistency.” However, in this age of transition of Arab culture, there are many Arab “minds”, so to speak, much like we, in the U.S., have many American minds. Arabs populate twenty-two countries or areas of North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>8</sup> We need to be cautious about over-generalizing to an entire culture, particularly one that is undergoing such rapid change. We can speculate, but we do not know, all of the important dimensions of individuality in Arab culture. In the course of our research for this paper we did not encounter particular research or writings on Arab culture that specifically identified concepts or language that Arabs use to distinguish or describe differences between one another, such as how in the West we describe features of one another in terms of personality. This is not to say that such language does not exist; it is to say that this has not likely been a robust topic of research summarized in Western resources.

Finally, an examination of Arab culture on any topic results in a risk of stereotypes that could be misleading. The value in exploring Arab culture lies, in part, in identifying the underlying traditions of that culture which most individuals have as their cultural background. The specifics of context and circumstances can influence how these traditions play out in terms of social interactions, for example, or interpretations of attitudes and behaviors.

## 2.6 A Note on the Arab World and Modernity

The Arab world is changing, and has been for the past two hundred years (see Laroui for a synoptic chronicle). In recent years, the pace of that change seems both dramatic and dynamic. We can ask several questions of the Arab world today with respect to change. Among them: Where is it now, Where is it going, and What is it that is changing – what does change look like? One of the challenges we face in answering any of these questions is the general lack of consistent pictures of where the Arab world has been, even in the past 100 years.

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Utah Press; or Tibi, B. (2008). *Islam's predicament with cultural modernity: Religious reform and cultural change*. New York, NY: Routledge.

<sup>8</sup> As of this writing the Arab countries/areas of the world are (alphabetically): Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Indeed, the various cultural resources that we have tabulated here vary in terms of when they were written and whom they were written for.

To pick a beginning point for the writings of the authors cited in this bibliography would put our track of the Arab culture in terms of contemporary views as around the 1930's or 40's (e.g., Patai, Berque). At the other end of the scale would be post-911; with an upsurge of interest in Arab culture and the opening of the Arab world to Western engagement came writers who have scanned the Arab landscape in the past decade (e.g., Nydell, Al-Omari). Still others have been concerned more with the Arab world in terms of its more recent political history (e.g., 1950's and 60's) and with the rise of Arab nationalism (e.g., Laroui). All recognize the same more distant history of the Arab culture, but tend to differ on how they view the nature of change and the relevance of the older Arab culture, sometimes referred to as the "Bedouin culture" (e.g., Nydell), to understanding the Arab world today.

This bibliography takes the view that culture is rooted not in the features of modernity but in the longer track of its history, and that even in the emerging and modern Arab world key cultural elements still reside that determine how members of the culture regard their history, interpret the past and project into the future. Not surprisingly, we have found that the Arabs described in writings of the 1930's and 1940's (and earlier) seem to exhibit many of the same propensities with respect to logic and emotion, for example, as the Arabs described in writings of the current decade.

### 3.0 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdennur, Alexander. (2008). *The Arab Mind: An Ontology of Abstraction and Concreteness*. Ottawa, Ontario: Kogna Publishing.

The Arab mind is global rather than holistic. The Arab mind is emotional, confrontational, and polemical. The Arab mind is radical. Arabs are concerned to protect society against the behavior of individuals. The Arab mind is active in defense of culture. An economic observation: In business transactions, small change is often ignored.

“The Arab tendency to express emotion and strong affect in everyday affairs, rather than having irrationality as its source, relates more to the taking of positions and expression of attitude after having deployed abstract categories. This quite rational type of emotionality can be observed in the undiminished polemics and heated debates that take place among Arab scholars.” (p. 56)

In this statement (and related text) Abdennur argues two main points. First, that the Arab has a strong proclivity for abstract representations and categorization of knowledge and opinions. The importance of these opinions is reflected in the use of emotional and affective expressions. Second, it is important to the Arab that the taking of a position is done. (NOTE: This is also observed by Patai who notes (see above) the tendency for Arabs to hold polarized views.)

Abdennur’s next section in this chapter (p. 56) goes on to note that the Arab mind is “confrontational and polemical.”

Abdennur, p. 77. This section deals with the Arab mind and what he refers to as two-dimensional thought. Starting from some work by Herbert Marcuse (1964), he develops the idea that the Arab mind, because of its tendency to abstract, represents concepts in terms of ideals that references concrete cases as representations but not as the ideal themselves and, according to Abdennur, are negations of the ideal because they cannot fully embody the ideal. Thus, the Arab is always thinking in two-dimensional terms – the ideal and its instantiation (and, implicitly, its negation). The result is Marcuse’s “unhappy consciousness” that follows from the “constant attempts of human beings to follow their ideal or emulate their ideal models but never fully succeed in their endeavors” (Abdennur’s interpretation). Thus, according to Abdennur, “The Arab mind . . . today still insists on remaining idealistic and unhappy.” He contrasts this with the one-dimensional epistemology of the west that does not strongly embody ideals, but is more pragmatic and happy with the way things are in the real world.

Abdennur, Chapter 5, p. 81: This chapter deals with the Arab in psychoanalytic terms and develops the concept of an “isolation mechanism” (attributable to someone else). Here, he goes deep and reflects his own Arab tendencies to engage in abstractions. Need to read this another time. It may be relevant to some things, but does not appear immediately relevant to the concept of risk.

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Ahmed, Akbar S. (1980). *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Fundamental principles of Pukhtun social organization: (1) *Tarboorwali*, the ceiling to wealth and power that an individual may accumulate. (2) An intense spirit of democracy in the tribal charter.

Honor is derived from a code governing women. The central issues of Pukhtun society revolve around the pursuit of power, status, and honor within the tribal genealogical framework. The aim is political domination at a certain lineage level, not economic gain.

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Al-Azmeh, Aziz. (1986). *Arabic Thought and Islamic Societies*. London, UK: Croom Helm.

This book presents an important discussion of Arab conceptions of time and events, how the past gives legitimacy to the present, how original events persist in importance, and how the present is a recapitulation of the past. It is best to present this in the author’s own words, which are very clear.

“[P]resent events and any other, including the future, are seen as repetitions of past occurrences.”

“[W]hen advice was proffered to a sovereign...by recourse to a past action, the sovereign was called upon to adopt that particular example as a legendary beginning....”

“[T]he genealogical call of dynasties and sciences are...based...on the recapitulation of an original event.” “All genealogies obey...a compulsion to recapitulate...the present in the guise of an inaugural event.”

“[A]rabic culture fashions myths out of the science of history.”

“[T]he past is not the progenitor of the present, but is at best its paradigm in the realm of history.”

“[I]f the present were ever-present in the intention of God...[its] origin becomes not only the ultimate explanatory principle of everything, but in fact all things become a mere repetition of origin.”

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Al-Omari, Jihad. (2008). *Understanding the Arab Culture: A practical cross-cultural guide to working in the Arab world (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*. Begbroke, Oxford, UK: HowTo Books, Ltd.

This book is oriented toward the business person who is preparing themselves for either their first personal encounter with an Arab culture, or to be better prepared after their first encounter. The focus is a great deal of basic cultural concepts, protocols and the like that influence business relationships. In addition, it discusses essential principles of Islam as well as general views held by Arabs of the Western world.

With respect to intertemporal reasoning, the author makes the following observations:

Section on “Managing Time In Polychronic Cultures” (borrows from the work of Edward Hall, though unacknowledged in the book) discusses Western cultures as fundamentally Monochronic Cultures and essentially clock-driven where key characteristics are doing one thing at a time, concentration on the job in hand and sticking to plans. Relationships between people in monochronic cultures are mainly functional. Time overrides relationships and task overrides personal feelings.

In polychronic cultures relationships are based on traditions and hospitality rather than functionality. Author characterizes Arab cultures as polychronic. Suggests Arab culture does not have a lack of respect for time, but rather devotes time to relationship factors rather than task or event factors. Arab culture can multi-task and tolerates high level of interruptions due to social influences (e.g., subordinates, colleagues, co-workers, visitors and telephone).

(Note: The concept of polychronic and monochronic cultures was originally advanced by Edward Hall in his book, *The Silent Language* (Hall, 1959). See separate entry for this reference.)

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Barth, Frederik. (1959). Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans.  
*London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology*  
 19. London.

Territory is organized in a hierarchy of subdivisions. Genealogies have two functions: (1) Define the segmentary hierarchy of groups and subgroups. (2) Define a time sequence in a written historical chronicle–i.e., give a relative chronology for migration and conquest.

This history is not alterable. It gives an absolute standard. The relationship of chronicles and traditional genealogies is maintained by careful oral traditions. Incompatibilities in such a system could lead to fictitious genealogies, but have not.

[Note: Long-term time is therefore reckoned through the remembrance of genealogies that cannot be altered. Reckoning of time, descent and control of land, the kinship system, and segmentary conflict are therefore intertwined. None of these elements can be separated from the others.]

Berque, Jacques. (1978). *Cultural Expression in Arab Society Today*  
 (R. W. Stookey, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

The use of Arabic in the banking industry was once considered not possible. But the language is evolving. In Egypt, banking and conference were formerly conducted in French. Arabic became a banking language at about the time of the Nasserist revolution (ca. 1961). Since then there has been much development of technical expression in Arabic. A “Middle” Arabic emerged, bridging the literary language and the language actually spoken. This replaces French and English in some roles. Middle Arabic aims to give the language new economic functionality, a new pragmatic base.

In traditional Muslim culture there was “...obsessive reference to the distant past.”

“The primary characteristic of the Bedouin poet is the sociological origin of his utterance. He is his people’s spokesman, who by his word exalts his own group against all others.” (p. 143).

“ . . .the poem has now become a giant trope and has asserted its autonomy. In so doing it detaches itself from the collective subjectivity upon which the ancient poetry was supposed to act, and is tending to integrate itself objectively into a history, in the every proportion to which it rejects the binary naïveties of representation.” (p. 292)

“However long it may be, indeed, a poem revolves in a recurring simultaneity, rather than unfolding over time. Furthermore, it is not told: it is retold, is memory. This is what the ancient Arab poetry illustrates by the name *dhikr*.” (p. 295)

“The oldest theme in Arab literature, that of *atl* (elegy on the vestiges of the abandoned camp), raises its own process to the level of inspiration by creating the poetic object out of the void. Whether the void results from a tribal emigration or from a poetic convention of rarefaction, the result will be the same: to make this vacuum the source of subsequent intensities.” (p. 295)

“Many of (the intensities of Arab poetry) are not merely aesthetic and psychic, but social. Arab poets often play an effective role in the course of events. In this capacity they enjoy power taken quite seriously by political leaders.” (p. 295)

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Bernstein, Peter L. (1998). *Against the gods: The remarkable story of risk*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Bernstein’s book is included here because it reflects a view on risk that is distinctly Western. It develops a history of the concept of risk based on the invention of mathematics and its application to probability theory, which it casts as the essential basis for risk. Along the way, it develops the concept of statistical sampling, base rates and the general scientific method. In addition, the book includes some of the history of insurance an investment enterprise, including annuities. Also included is a development of Bernoulli’s concept of expected value, as well as Bernoulli’s critique that there is more to utility than expectation (pg. 106). The focus of the book is on distinctly Western concepts of risk as reflected, for example, in Bernoulli’s formulation of the notion of “human capital” as a stream of value that results from the years over which a given individual lives.(p. 108).

The book’s focus is on risk as predictive framework, as a window into the future, and as a way we have come to control and master our destiny (see, particularly, the introductory sections). His ultimate aim is to lead the reader into the realm of risk in finance. The book is a readable treatment of the historical threads that lead to our present day ideas about risk as a quantifiable (or quantified) concept. The same treatment might be available in a number of books on, for example, the history of statistics or applied mathematics, though not written in as lively a manner.

For Bernstein, “Reality is a series of connected events.” While that may be true, for some non-Western cultures the nature of connectivity differs. In Western culture, connectivity is causal and bounded by, for example, temporal sequencing that places certain kinds of prohibitions or constraints on connectivities that can occur. In some other cultures (e.g., Arab culture, temporal sequencing is, in some circumstances, a less significant form of connectivity, and a thematic or associative connectivity is more important. Here, a different set of constraints on connectivity are in place: connections are only made to the degree that they either derive from or are supported by pre-existing culture-based theories or worldviews about the nature of reality and cosmology. Bernstein’s enthusiastic approach to the topic masks the underlying cultural assumptions upon which his exposition rests. For the reader willing to suspend acceptance of the inevitability of the ideas contained in the book, this is an excellent overview of what to the Western world is a defining model of rationality.

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Besteman, Catherine. (1999). *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

“[P]eople in Loc talked about their history by making reference to...remembered highlights.”

Historical time is tracked in 7-year intervals, identifying each year by the day on which it began according to the Muslim calendar. There is a Monday year, a Tuesday year, etc. Significant past events are retained as memories, e.g. “...the Thursday year of Cholera,” “My mother died five *axads* ago [five Sunday years ago].”

Significant events include droughts, floods, epidemics, famines, and colonial activities. Villagers debate among themselves to produce specific dates, events, and names.

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Hall, Edward T. (1959). *The Silent Language*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Edward Hall was an anthropologist and researcher on cross-cultural issues. He is, perhaps, most well known for his concept of “high context” and “low context” cultures as a basis for characterizing how the identity of the individual is framed



and determined by their cultural context. Western cultures are generally thought of as “low context” cultures, meaning that the individual is seen as relatively constant as the context changes. We see this in, for example, the Western notion that people have personality features that endure across a range of contextual situations. On the other than, “high context” cultures are those in which the individual is seen to be tied or linked to the context such that their properties as an individual change with context. Asian cultures, for example, are regarded in Hall’s taxonomy as “high context” cultures. The status of Arab culture is uncertain in this regard.

In his 1959 book *The Silent Language*, Hall advanced the notion of *polychronicity* to describe how some cultures have the ability to manage multiple events and activities simultaneously (what today we might call multi-tasking), while other *monochronic* cultures tend to manage events sequentially. In Hall’s terms, Western cultures tend to exhibit *monochronicity*, which emphasizes the planning and scheduling of activities into relatively fixed sequences from which deviation is difficult. Associated with monochronicity is a tendency toward relatively fine divisions of time in intervals or units, as opposed to polychronicity that more readily accommodates time in terms of broad generalities and that allows more easily for interruptions and delays.

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Khaldûn, Ibn. (1969/2005). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. (F. Rosenthal, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ibn Kahldûhn is one of the Arab culture’s most respected historical figures. Ibn Kahldûhn was a 14<sup>th</sup> century scholar and statesman who, in his time, produced a text titled the *Muqaddimah*, generally regarded as the first attempt by any historian to discover changes in human patterns of political and social organization. Modeled somewhat on the works of Aristotle, the *Muqaddimah* is an encyclopedic-style representation of history, not in terms of events but in terms of philosophy. Ibn Kahldûhn’s perspective is that of “man” and the influence of the physical and social environment on the individual. Even in contemporary Arab culture, Ibn Kahldûhn remains respected for his intellectual and spiritual leadership, and is looked to as a benchmark for reconciling new ideas with old.

It is informative that the *Muqaddimah*, despite being a history, contains very few dates and those that are included are the names of a few key Arab/Islamic leaders mentioned in a brief forward. In over 400 pages of historical analysis as applied by Ibn Kahldûhn, chronology as we recognize it in the West is not present.

One of the topics that Ibn Kahldûhn dealt with in the *Muqaddimah* was that of *causality*. He noted that:

“This world with all the created things in it has a certain order and solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some part of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless.” (p. 74)

From this general precept, he builds upon a larger scope of creation, extending from “the minerals” and progressing to plants and animals. His taxonomic framework focuses on the results of what he calls “causal nexuses”. However, the underlying nature of causation for Ibn Kahldûhn lies in the realm of the creation for which his only theory is a theological one – the causation he speaks of is that of God. To Ibn Kahldûhn, the fact that we see the world around us is a testimony and, therefore, a proof of the existence of a creator.

Ibn Kahldûhn proscribed in the *Muqaddimah* the division of Arab language and speech into two branches: rhymed poetry and non-metrical prose. He further defined the purposes and ends for poetry (“heroic poems and elegies) as distinct from prose (“sermons and prayers and speeches intended to encourage or frighten the masses (pg. 441).” Thus, as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century we see a strongly defined linkage between how poetry and prose are structured and the appropriate role for its inclusion in language and leadership (even political discourse).

Khaldûn advanced a historically important Arab cultural, that of *asabiyyah*. *Asabiyyah* can be interpreted in terms of a number of western concepts such as social solidarity, cultural unity, social cohesion and group consciousness. It can also be thought of as the *group feeling* that accompanies Arab life. Note that it is not a sense of collective power, but rather addresses the connectedness inherent in Arab society. *Asabiyyah* can also refer to the cohesive strength that binds individuals into a group. The communal bonds created by *Asabiyyah* are, to this day, influential in how Arab culture fosters and maintains its social order.

*Asabiyyah* is defined Ibn Khaldûn as originating in kinship: “Group feeling (*asabiyyah*) results only from blood relationship or something corresponding to it.” (p. 98). *Asabiyyah*, a term created by Khaldûn, is described (and even proscribed) in the *Muqaddimah* as an essential condition for leadership and religion.

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Khouri, Lorraine Mary. (1976). *Arab Children's Play as a Reflection of Social Interaction Patterns of Their Culture*. Ed.D. Dissertation, Department of Education, University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

Discusses the importance to Arabs of concepts of time and punctuality.

Here again, a quotation from the author conveys the information clearly:

“While a great deal of time is spent in conversational exploits, the concept of time is not a very important concern to an Arab. The feeling of punctuality, or a vigorous time schedule, does not exist in the traditional culture.”

Laroui, Abdallah. (1976). *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism?* (D. Cammell, Trans.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

The central thesis of the work is that the concept of history is peripheral to all Arab world ideologies. Arab intellectuals “have a non-evolutionary conception of reality....”

“[T]he language and culture of the Arabs express themselves...in poetry and literary prose.”

Arabs have had a view of history different from other Middle Eastern Muslims–Turks, Iranians, Pakistanis. Arabs distinguish between *taʾrīkh*–established, controlled knowledge of past or present facts–and *historia* (from Greek)–legend or mythical tale.

In early Arab states (8th-9th centuries) historiography had the purpose of determining the legal status of individuals and collectivities. This was founded on testimony.

Testimony is the mainstay of history. The Arab approach to history is unique in having three phases:

- Antecedent history, that is, history before the Prophet.
- The prophetic period. This period is the foundation of all truth.
- Successors to the prophetic period. In this period, Sunni historians accepted narratives that might unite the community of Muslims. They did not accept anything divisive. This process was regarded as highly objective.

For periods 1 and 3, God was not present. Events of these periods are merely facts without meaning. Therefore events are not positive facts in their own right.

Events of periods 1 and 3 have no self-sufficient reality. Therefore, history as a totality of events “does not constitute a level of reality possessing an autonomous consistency, where actions...can cause other actions to appear.”

“All facts are equal and can appear in any order whatever.” History is not a succession but a juxtaposition of new beginnings. Between these new beginnings (i.e., the start of new dynasties), God had withdrawn.

Today there are four attitudes to history: (1) Traditionalist: Divine action explains causality. (2) Nationalist: History in service of a political idea. (3) Marxist materialist. (4) Positivist—mainly in academic faculties.

History remains subservient to other purposes. In addition to the classical vision, contemporary Arabs have added ideological deformation of nationalist sentiments. Most Arabs, though, hold to the classical vision.

The ancient historical vision implied that historical development could be lengthened or shortened at will. One could let time go by for, on a certain day, all would be obliterated and instantaneously reconstituted.

Justice will eventually be dispensed. In this vein, Arabs thinking in the classical vein believe that Jews will someday leave Palestine “as if by magic.”

Prior to independence, Arabs did not think of ideological thinking as ideological. Concerning questions about individualism, revolution, development: “[B]ehind this questioning lies a concept of history as the sole reality.”

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Lewis, I. M. (1994). *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.

Somalia has a segmentary lineage system, based on genealogies to putative ancestors. But genealogies are manipulated to reflect contemporary politics and power. Somalis distinguish between short and long genealogical branches. Larger branches have longer genealogies. Somalis use a metaphor of plants and trees to describe genealogies (*laan gaab* = short branch; *laan deer* = long branch). A longer genealogical span equates to higher political power. Shorter ones are weaker.

There is pride in pedigrees and mythical connections to noble Arab families. Writing in Arabic script encourages this mythologizing.

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Lewis, I. M. (2002). *A Modern History of Somalia* (fourth edition). Oxford: James Currey.

Arabic is sufficiently widely known in Somalia as to be almost a second language. Somalis, though, retain an unusually rich oral literature in their own language (and this oral literature will be a major way that knowledge of the past is passed on).

Lindholm, Charles. (1982). *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

The Pukhtun are organized into an acephalous system of patrilineal lineages. These lineages are able to unite to repel invaders. The Pukhtun adhere to an ideological model that is followed in action with little individual variation. Hospitality is central to the value system, and generosity is a way to win followers.

Due to the influence of the outside world, in recent years men have left to find work. But they return with a sense of inevitable continuity. The village will go on as it always has. Still, immersion in a monetary economy has eroded the old economies of barter and patron-client relationships. Previously, clients joined their patrons in battles against other patron-client groups. [NB: These patrons are what the media call “warlords.”] Now there is movement toward horizontal cleavages and class conflict. The poor for the first time see themselves as a distinct interest group.

One aspect of continuity is the continued ability to unite against outsiders. But lineages and even individuals are unable to stay united. Struggle and opposition are enduring aspects of life. “Violence, structured through institutions of feud and warfare, is perhaps the most important formative element in Middle Eastern segmentary lineage societies such as Swat” (p. 56).

Lineage members claim descent from a common ancestor, but become coherent only in opposition to other lineages. Large numbers of Pukhtun men can be united against outsiders. Tribes are organized only for offense and defense. [NB: a tribe here would be a higher level of organization than a lineage, consisting of several lineages.] Yet in Swat, there is more violence between individuals than between organized groups.

Land rights are inherited through the patrilineal genealogy. *Tarburwali*: relationships of enmity. There are cross-cutting organizations. Villages are divided

into neighborhoods, which are in turn divided into wards. Wards are dominated by and named after a leader. Neighborhoods and wards are cross-cut by a dualistic party structure. Each party extends outward into a network of alliances. A powerful leader of such an alliance can name members in 50 or more villages.

Land, wealth, and power correspond. Men are expected to present themselves as completely self-reliant. Close relatives are in constant conflict over land. There is an individualistic ideal. Each individual is seen as struggling against all others for survival and personal honor. Notwithstanding the social structure, the Pukhtun believe that individuals stand alone, independent of the world.

Wage earning is considered of lower status than overseeing a farm. Rivalries are carried into business life. Pukhtun don't want to work for other Pukhtun; to do so is demeaning. Outsiders are considered inferior, but it is acceptable to work for them. Because of the need to wheedle and be obsequious, it is hard to start a business. But men will join an existing partnership.

Barter is the favorite mode of exchange. Gifts are given to outsiders. Giving without receiving in return is "loved by Allah." Receiving without giving is "disliked by Allah" (p. 116). Loans can be received from outsiders, sometimes through a female relative. Loans have moral connotations. Both parties are "loved by Allah" (p. 117). But to ask for a loan implies that one is not self-sufficient. Therefore one asks through an intermediary. Credit is gained from shopkeepers, banks, and government agencies, even though all are considered inferior to Pukhtun. Debts to Pukhtuns must be repaid. When debts are owed to outsiders, there is no moral obligation to repay.

Among themselves, Pukhtun merchants will give their wares to other Pukhtun without payment. Taking money from a fellow Pukhtun is demeaning. It implies that one is a servant. Payment taken from an outsider (i.e., an inferior) is acceptable. It ratifies the Pukhtun's superiority. A market where all buyers and sellers are equal is a threat to Pukhtun notions of reciprocity between equals. Pukhtun strive to avoid relations of dependence between equals. This makes partnerships impossible.

Men of a partilineage are rivals over inheritance (land). Pukhtun men are often cold and treacherous to each other. All relationships contain elements of hostility, contempt, or both. Brother-sister is the most powerful bond.

Interaction with other cultures brings shame and fear of public humiliation.

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Lindholm, Charles. (1996). *Frontier Perspectives: Essays in Comparative Anthropology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swat has a segmentary lineage system. Unification occurs in opposition. A ruling elite emerged during the British colonial period. In recent years, weakening of the power of the central state has led to a resurgence of segmentary rivalries and a social leveling process. There are constantly shifting political coalitions.

The basic elements of society involve rivalry with close patrilineal relatives and neighbors. For the Pukhtun, the ideal society would involve no reciprocity or exchange. Each man is ideally aloof and independent. Cooperation is possible only if there is an external threat. Cooperative schemes collapse into suspicion and mutual accusation.

Mothers and sons are considered allied against the father.

Violence is highly structured by degrees of revenge and the scale of genealogical distance between rivals.

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Nydell, Margaret K. (1987). *Arabs: A Guide for Westerners*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

The book focuses on elites—business persons, bureaucrats, managers, scientists, professors, intellectuals. Educated Arab individuals are split between those who are traditional and those who are open to being more Western. Arabs who are both at once tend to be confused and unhappy.

Elite Arabs are torn between values. Some try to find a compromise. Others feel threatened by Western values, and reject them. These turn to fundamentalism, and make symbolic gestures that confirm old values (e.g., use of the burka). his conflict is reflected in increased publication of religious tracts; increased numbers of religious orations; and the publication of more Islamic newspapers and books.

In Arab culture, an oral promise has its own value, even if it cannot be fulfilled. Etiquette demands a positive response. “Yes” should not be taken literally. [Note: A promise does not need to be fulfilled. Value lies in making the promise. “Yes” does not mean what it means in the West. Agreement is a matter of being polite. These things have caused a lot of problems for Americans in Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab world.]

Arabs believe most matters are controlled by fate and they tend to exhibit fatalism: Humans are helpless to control events. (Although, this is not so much the belief among educated elites.) Arabs react to adversity with resignation.

Arabs reasoning is emotional and they tend to allow subjective perceptions to direct actions. Honor is more important than facts.

Presented with a business proposal, Arabs will evaluate the person who makes the proposal as much as they will evaluate its content. Good manners are the most important factor in evaluating a person's character. Generosity is essential.

There are three social classes: (1) The Upper Class (including royalty and some wealthy people). These people are influential and tend to have large families. (2) The Middle Class, consisting of government employees, military officers, teachers, moderately prosperous merchants, and landowners. (3) The Poor, both urban and those who live in villages. The nomadic Bedouin are a separate class.

Class is determined almost entirely by family origin. Family loyalty and obligations take precedence over friends or jobs. People make little effort to rise to the next class.

Rhetoric is admired, and Arabs will exaggerate for effect.

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Oren, Michael B. (2007). *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

Michael Oren is a journalist and has written a number of books on the Middle East. This book details a history of American involvement in the Middle East from the time of our earliest diplomatic relations with that part of the world to the present day.

Although the content of the book does not deal directly with the concepts in the project or provide much detail about Arab culture, it does give the reader a highly accessible resource for understanding the history and politics that form the basis for our current relationships with Arab (and other) nations.

The author's framework for historical analysis is organized around three key themes. Power, both economic and military, borne from early confrontations between an emerging American independent nation's shipping industry and Middle Eastern monarchs who exacted protectionist tribute and ransom. Faith, in terms of the effects of religion on shaping American attitudes toward the Middle



East. Fantasy in terms of the allure the Middle East held for Americans of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century as captured by the images and motifs that stimulated the visual arts as well as travel to Middle Eastern destinations.

The value of the book for understanding Arab culture is in the picture it paints of the nature of our early engagements with that culture, and the contrasts that the culture holds for our own.

Patai, Raphael. (2007). *The Arab Mind*. Long Island City, NY: Hatherleigh Press.

This book was originally published in 1973, revised in 1983. The current edition contains generally the same text as previous versions, but with additional demographic information on the Arab world. The author is Hungarian and has written a number of book on the Middle East and on Middle Eastern religions.

More than many books on Arab culture, this book emphasizes the role that the Arabic language plays in determining and reflecting key features of the culture. We focus here on some important points that Patai makes and that are relevant to the topic of this bibliography.

The Arab language is excellent for rhetoric and leads naturally to exaggeration (*mubtalaḡha*) and over-assertion (*tawkkid*). Arabs are, relative to Westerners, swayed by words more than by ideas or facts. As a result, Arabs will state as facts things that they only wish for (e.g., military victories).

Arab verbs have various emphatic forms and Arabs have difficulty shedding exaggeration when using European languages. For an Arab, assent can be a means of evasion. Intention is signaled by exaggeration and repetition. Arabs can feel they must over-assert and exaggerate to make sure they are not misunderstood. Statements that may seem factual to Arabs may seem to Americans to be extreme or violent.

Arabs may be generally unaware of their tendency toward exaggeration. In daily life, Lebanese mothers will often threaten their children, but don't carry out the threat. Overall, Arabs are conditioned to make empty threats.

Arabs will announce an incipient action as if it was an accomplished fact. Furthermore, an intention to do something, a plan to do something, or taking the first step may all be presented as an accomplishment of the action.

With regard to intertemporal reasoning, there is a "...general disinclination or inability of Arabs to concern themselves with precisely defined terms." They will

not fix the time of a future event. Arabs have no concept of punctuality. Maintaining time schedules is difficult.

In the Arabic language, the imperfect verb tense can stand for the present, the past, or the future. The perfect verb tense can also mean the pluperfect, the future, or the present participle. [Note: In other words, the language does not lend itself to precise expressions of time.]

Arabic verb tenses are semantically vague and indeterminate. This should endow all of Arab culture with similar perceptions of time. They are less concerned than Westerners with time, past events, or ordering life according to schedules.

Arabs are not concerned about the relative placement of past events. The past is, as noted by Patai, "one huge undifferentiated entity." The past imperceptibly merges into the present and the future. For example, the Koran presents Miriam, the sister of Moses, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, as the same person. Arab histories often contain anachronisms, and are confused in detail and chronology. They are sparing in the presentation of dates.

Regarding religious views of planning and fatalism: For a tradition-bound Arab "...there is even something sinful in engaging in long-range planning." Planning implies a lack of trust in divine providence. Arabs therefore do not make provisions for the future. There is a tendency toward acceptance of one's place and circumstances. There is a disinclination to improvement. The making of long-range efforts is considered close to rebellion against Allah and his will.

In principle, Arabs therefore often abdicate responsibility for improving their lot. In practice, though, they do often aim to improve their circumstances. This is reconciled as follows: A belief in predestination exists on one level of thought. Everyday behavior exists on another level. They will, for example, resort to magic.

Arabs tend to take a polarized view and tend to see contrasts rather than gradations. They are inclined to extremes. All unbelievers are a single entity. Any unbeliever can be attacked (e.g., Copts) for the action of any other (e.g., British, Americans, Israelis). Factual realities have little hold on the Arab psyche. They give greater weight to wishes than to reality.

Arabs today are divided into progressive and conservative factions.

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Schuon, Frithjof. (1998). *Understanding Islam*. Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom.

Frithjof Schuon has written a number of books on religion and religious philosophy. In general, he has focused on Islam and related aspects (e.g., Sufism), but his scope includes a deep knowledge of other religious traditions, including Christianity and Buddhism. Schuon is a difficult writer to read, in part because of the complexity and depth of his expositions. This book, *Understanding Islam*, though having a title suggesting greater accessibility than some of his other works, is nonetheless a very thorough discussion of Islam based in part on a comparison with Christianity. His stated purpose of the book “is not so much to give a description of Islam as to explain . . . why Moslems believe in it.”

Schuon’s approach is to be sometimes philosophical and sometimes psychological. Although he might take issue with that framing of his writing, there are many valuable insights into the modes of perception and thought that are part of the Islamic framework and that he carefully sets out for the reader to see. For the reader not ready to undertake a book-length journey into Schuon’s description of Islam, the first 40-page chapter provides an illuminating backdrop to the worldview of the Moslem. The following excerpts maybe helpful in preparing for a deeper reading of this and other works on Islam by other authors.

“If we go to the very root of things we are obliged to note . . . that the basic reason for the mutual lack of understanding between Christians and Moslems lies in this: the Christian always sees before him his will – this will that is as it were himself – and so is confronted by an indeterminate vocational space into which he can plunge, bringing into play his faith and his heroism . . . The outlook of the Moslem is very different: he sees before him – before his intelligence which chooses the One – not a space for the will such as would seem to him a temptation to individualistic adventuring, but a system of channels divinely predisposed for the equilibrium of his volitive life . . .” (pp. 7-8)

NOTE: Schuon discusses in a number of places the centrality of the will and self-determinism in Christianity, linking it with ego and the development of individual identity (e.g., heroism). This he contrasts with the view of Islam that focuses on intelligence.

“Christianity is founded on an ‘event’ and Islam on ‘being,’ on the nature of things; that which appears in Christianity as a unique fact, the Revelation, is seen in Islam as the rhythmic manifestation of a principle.” (p. 9)

“Allusion has already been made to the non-historical character of the Islamic perspective. This character explains not only its intention of being simply the repetition of a timeless reality or a phase in a nameless rhythm, and so a ‘reform,’ but it also explains such Islamic ideas as that of continual creation.” (pp. 9-10).

NOTE: Here Schuon begins to discuss the event-based nature of Christianity and by implication the Judeo-Christian tradition. Within that tradition, events are central to understanding God’s plans and intentions – meaning resides in the interpretation of events. In Islam, events are far less important than are principles, which are continually present (unlike events). Here Schuon uses the notion of “rhythmic” to describe the way principles or features of the Revelation are ever-present in a reoccurring stream.

“Islam is in essence equilibrium and union; it does not *a priori* sublimate the will by sacrifice, but neutralizes it by the Law, while at the same time laying stress on contemplation.” (p. 21).

NOTE: There is a definite eastern philosophical theme to Schuon’s interpretation, and particularly to his use of the concepts of equilibrium and union. The associations to balance and holism are strong here.

“Like all traditional civilizations Islam is a ‘space,’ not a ‘time’; for Islam ‘time’ is only the corruption of this ‘space.’ (p. 22)

NOTE: Here we see in Schuon a theme seen elsewhere, namely the diminutive role that the concept of time plays in the essential nature of Islam. Schuon characterizes the Islamic view of time as a “corruption” which can mean several things, including a transgression. That is, the “space” is sacred, but to reconfigure it in terms of “time” is a sin or blasphemy.

“In the life of a people there are as it were two halves; one constitutes the play of its earthly existence, the other its relationship with the Absolute. Now what determines the value of a people or of a civilization is not the literal form of its earthly dream . . . but its capacity to ‘feel’ the Absolute and in the case of specially privileged souls, to reach the Absolute.” (p. 24)

“Modern thought is not in any definitive sense one doctrine among others; it is the result of a particular phase of its own unfolding and will become what materialistic and experimental science or machines make it; no longer is it human intellect but machines – or physics, or chemistry or biology – that decide what man is, what intelligence is, what truth is.” (p. 25)

NOTE: In other sections of the book, Shuon discusses the relativism of Christianity in relationship to the Absolutism of Islam. He argues that Christian relativism leaves us open to inserting earthly (or human) elements between man and God. As a result, we can come to believe that the world is not what it appears to be, and we can substitute science for God.

“What is most totally human is what gives man the best chances for the hereafter, and this is what also most deeply corresponds to his nature.” (p. 26).

“It is just as important to beware of a chimerical optimism as of despair; the former is contrary to the ephemeral reality of the world we live in and the latter to the eternal reality we already bear within ourselves, which alone makes our human and earthly condition intelligible.” (p.28).

“According to an Arab proverb which reflects the Moslem’s attitude to life, slowness comes from God and haste from Satan, and this leads to the following reflection: as machines devour time, modern man is always in a hurry, and since this perpetual lack of time creates in him reflexes of haste and superficiality, modern man mistakes these reflexes – which compensate corresponding forms of disequilibrium – for marks of superiority and in his heart is contemptuous of the men of old with their ‘idyllic’ habits . . . “ (pp. 28-29)

“Any contemplative attitude and thus any refusal to situate total truth and the meaning of life in external agitation is today labeled ‘escapism.’ “ (p. 29)

NOTE: Once again, Schuon relates to the pace of Islamic life and its attachment to rhythmic processes. His views about haste and the emphasis on hurrying in modern life are also reflective of his views about the replacement of what is natural in man with machine views of the world. These views corroborate the often-observed disinclination for members of the Arab culture to exhibit punctuality or a strong proclivity to think in terms of finely-resolved units of time.

“. . . the European temperament does not readily tolerate exaggeration as a mode of expression, whereas for the Oriental hyperbole is a way of bringing out an idea or an intention, of marking the sublime or of expressing what cannot be described . . . An Occidental attaches importance to factual exactitude, but his lack of intuition regarding the ‘immutable essences’ counterbalances this, greatly diminishing the range of his spirit of observation’ an Oriental on the contrary has a sense of the metaphysical transparency of things but is apt to neglect . .

. the exactitude of earthly facts; for him the symbol is more important than the experience.” (p. 32)

NOTE: Other writers, including Patai and Abdennur, comment on the Arab tendency toward exaggeration in their speech and mannerisms. In general, these writers attribute this to psychological tendencies associated with a different emotional tonality than people in the West. Schuon presents a slightly different take on this, and views it as a result of a kind of exoteric amazement at the fact of the creation, which in the Islamic view is symbolic of God. Also in Schuon’s characterization is the observation of the strong preference for exactness so prevalent in the Western mind.

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Sells, Michael A. (1989). *Desert Tracings*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Michael Sells is a well-known translator of Arab writings. *Desert Tracings* is a newly translated collection of six *qasidas* or odes that date from the Bedouin tribes of pre-Islamic Arabia. In this volume, Sells provides both translation of the odes as well as a discussion and interpretation of their relationship to Arab history and thought. The following quotes capture key elements of Sells’ characterization:

“The qasida opens onto the abandoned campsite – traces in the sand from rain trenches and tent pegs, blackened hearthstones, ruins left by the beloved’s tribe. The traces are silent. Yet they invoke. As the poet stands before them the tension of this silent invocation demands release. This is the site and wellspring of the poem.” (p. 4)

“Another largely oral tradition, jazz, may offer an analogy. A song evolves with each performance. The artist learns its basic contours and then, building upon a rigorous apprenticeship in the expectations and possibilities of the tradition, performs it. [T]he early Arabian poem was not – or not only – memorized. It was remembered, recalled from out of a common sensibility and a common cultural gestalt.” (p. 4)

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Sells, Michael A. (2007). *Approaching the Qur'an: The early revelations*. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press.

There are a large number of texts that provide an introduction to the Qur'an in English. This text, from Michael Sells, is a selective presentation of the Qur'an with both English translation and a commentary on each Sura.

The Qur'an itself is not a clear resource on Arab mindset with respect to intertemporal reasoning. Rather, it is background to other writings on the way in which Islam frames perception of history and events. Frithjof Schuon's *Understanding Islam* (see entry) provides a deeper (though less readable) analysis of Islamic thought.

The following quotes are from Sells' introduction and from commentaries to the individual Suras:

"[A] key difference between Qur'anic and Biblical traditions is in narrative style. The Qur'an does not narrate the sacred history of the prophets in a linear fashion. . . . Aspects of the story of Moses, for example, occur in 44 different passages in the Qur'an, but are never brought together in a single Sura. This Qur'anic way of storytelling, unusual to those accustomed to the biblical tradition, has aroused a number of conflicting interpretations and value judgments. . . . Norman Brown recently suggested that it is this very scattered or fragmented mode of composition that allows the Qur'an to achieve its most profound effect, as if the intensity of the prophetic message were shattering the vehicle of human language in which it was being communicated." (p. 15)

"The Qur'an has commonly been referred to as repetitive. From the thematic point of view, this is certainly the case. All the themes in The Darkening (Sura 88) can be found in other Suras. Yet from the point of view of the Qur'anic experience, such a Sura is much more than repetition. Like a musical theme that is varied and then brought back to an original pattern, the central themes return in new combinations. There are subtle and important shifts in the imagery of the cosmic apocalypse, the psychological portrayal of those who experience the final revelation, the tone and perspective of the discussion of the role of the Qur'anic reminder, the interweaving of awe and intimacy, the movement between a depiction of the all-forgiving deity and the warnings to those who persist in doing harm." (p. 75)

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Smith, Huston. (1991). *The World's Religions*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.

Huston Smith is, perhaps, one of the best-known academic writers on comparative religion. This volume, as well as its predecessor *The Religions of Man* (1986), has for many years been a mainstay of university courses on religious philosophy. The book is an accessible introduction to the eight major historical religions of the world, including Islam.

Smith's chapter on Islam focuses largely on the historical roots of Islam, including the life of the Prophet (Muhammed), as well as the basic theological concepts of Islam. It is a very readable resource for background on Islam.

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Tracy, David. (1987). *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York, NY: Crossroads.

This book is oriented toward Christian theologians, particularly Catholics. The book seeks common ground through which a theological conversation among individuals from different traditions and cultures can proceed. Tracy seeks the universal but in radical particularity, as expressed in the notion of a classic work of art. He argues that classics through their radical particularity, i.e., their intensification of human experience in a particular place and time, attain to universals that transcend culture. Tracy appears to assume, but does not discuss, an essential humanity that can be variously expressed in a wide range of cultures. These cultures have an inner logic, a coherence that can be captured in classic productions which are then accessible to members of other cultures – through an analogical imagination. This bridge forms the basis for a productive conversation in a pluralistic setting.

The following are selected passages from the text that highlight these themes...

“When one reflects upon the meaning of that experienced reality of conversation...one recognizes certain signal realities. Real conversation occurs only when the participants allow the question, the subject matter, to assume primacy. It occurs only when our usual fears about our own self-image die: whether that fear is expressed in either arrogance or scrupulosity matters little. That fear dies only because we are carried along, and sometimes away, by the subject matter itself into the rare event or happening named “thinking” and “understanding.” For understanding *happens*, it *occurs*



not as the pure result of personal achievement but in the back-and-forth movement of the conversation itself.”(p 101)

“When the text is a classic, I am also recognizing that its *excess of meaning*” both demands constant interpretation and bears a certain kind of timelessness—namely the timeliness of a classic expression radically rooted in its own historical time and calling to my own historicity. That is, the classical text is not some timeless moment which needs mere repetition. Rather its kind of timelessness as a permanent timeliness is the only one proper to any expression of the finite, temporal, historical beings we are.” (p. 102)

“The notion of a classic is not confined to classicist norms. Rather, the experience of the classic remains a permanent feature of any human being’s cultural experience.”(p. 108)

“If even once, a person has experienced a text, a gesture, an image, an event, a person with the force of the recognition: “This is important! This does make and will demand a difference!” then one has experienced a candidate for classic status.”(p 116)

“The subject of the interpreter, in short, is always a social subject. As related to the other selves in the tradition, the subject is intrinsically intrasubjective. As formed by the community and as responsible to the wider community of inquirers and readers, the subject is communal. As involved in this tradition, this culture—above all in any native language which embodies and carries the history of the effects and interpretations of the tradition—the subject is radically and irretrievably historical in the exact sense of historicity. Every present moment is, in fact, formed by both the memories of the tradition and the hopes, desires, critical demands for transformation for the future. The notion of the present moment as pure instant, an ever-receding image, is as mistaken as the allied notion of a pure—isolated, purely autonomous—subject.”(pp. 118-119)

“No more than the interpreter of the classic is the original artist a solitary self. The artist, too, is a particular self with a particular history in a particular culture. The artist, too, is a finite, social, historical self employing a language that carries the entire history of the effects and influence of the tradition. And yet the artist, in engaging in the production of the work of art, does have a peculiar, even a privileged place...The artist, the thinker, the hero, the saint—who are they, finally, but the finite self radicalized and intensified?”(pp. 124-125)

“The moment named *intensification* is, in fact, fundamentally a moment of experience and understanding. More exactly, a person gives oneself over to, is

caught up in, the most serious game of all... the game of *the truth of existence*.”(p. 126)

“The power of an analogical imagination as imagination was honored by Aristotle in his famous dictum “to spot the similar in the dissimilar is the mark of poetic genius.” That same power—at once participatory in the originating event of wonder, trust, disclosure and concealment by the whole, and positively distancing itself from that event by its own self-constituting demands of critical reflection.”(p. 410)

“This may seem not only a strange paradox, but a painful destiny to us Westerners, with our engrained belief in the ideal of individuality (all too often corrupted into the hard dogma of individualism or caricatured into the soft doctrine of the narcissist self). Yet it is true: We understand one other through analogies to our own experience and we understand ourselves through our real internal relations to and analogous understandings of the other. ”(p. 452)

Williams, Judith. (1968). *The Youth of Haouch el Harimi, a Lebanese Village. Harvard Middle Eastern Monograph Series XX*. Cambridge.

This reference pertains to anthropological fieldwork conducted 1949-50 and 1963.

Haouch el Harimi is a traditional and isolated village in the Bekaa Valley. At the time of the fieldwork, broader changes had been little felt there. Workers who leave and return are important agents of change. By 1963, people traveled more widely and more often.

In 1963, Islam had lost impact as an arbiter of personal conduct, but was important for identity. [Note: It would be interesting to see if this has changed since 1963, if Islam is again an arbiter of personal conduct.]

Kinship systems refer to the *beit* (household) and *aili* (family). Both terms can refer to the nuclear family, extended family, or lineage. Lineages can have between 40 and 166 people.

Discontent is considered acceptable for boys, but not for girls. The kinship networks are essential for fulfilling aspirations in the absence of other mechanisms of opportunity.

“[H]aouchis are unaccustomed and reluctant to ponder along the time dimension.” The past is not of concern; the future is in God’s hands. “There

is...a disregard for time as a measure or gauge of events.” Informants would transpose early childhood events to adulthood, and conversely. Informants would date or order events in terms of external markers—a wedding, a holiday, a fight, etc. People were indifferent about age.

One-half of the boys and 6 of 15 girls were able to speak of the future, but with prodding. In regard to the future, many of the boys have unrealistic aspirations. They find the past harder to reflect upon. They do generally remember their pasts with contentment. [Note: just not with specificity.]

<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>				<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 30-11-2011		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Research Report		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> Sep 2009 - Nov 2011	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning: An Annotated Bibliography				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b> N00014-09-C-0570	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Donald G. MacGregor, Ph.D. Joseph A. Tainter, Ph.D. Joseph R. Godfrey, Ph.D.				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b> 4	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> MacGregor Bates, Inc. 1010 Villard Avenue Cottage Grove, OR, 97424 USA				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b> MBI-ONR-2011-1	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Office of Naval Research 875 North Randolph St. Attention: Ivy Estabrooke Code: 30 Arlington, VA 22203-1995				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Unlimited Distribution					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> This bibliography was produced as part of an Office of Naval Research project titled "Cultural Influences on Intertemporal Reasoning." The project approach is intended to provide a platform of knowledge based on existing research that will improve our ability to field useful and meaningful decision support in cultures where the capacity for such support is either limited or non-existent, with a focus on three non-Western cultures: Arab, Pashtun and Somali culture. The focus of the project is on intertemporal reasoning and how the focal cultures differ in this respect from the West. Intertemporal reasoning is defined as the psychosocial and cultural processes engaged when people are called upon to either integrate past experiences and events or projects forward to the future. This bibliography is a collection of annotated entries that each of the three project researchers developed as part of their particular examination of the existing literature. Emphasis is on Arab culture, owing to the relative availability of resources published in English. Intended readers include those with an interest in this highly-focused aspect of non-Western cultures.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Arab culture, cross-cultural psychology, cross-cultural reasoning					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> SAR	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 35	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Donald G. MacGregor
a. REPORT U	b. ABSTRACT U	c. THIS PAGE U			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> (541) 942-5727